

Bright Supports Agriculture Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Bobby Bright recently voted for the Conference Report on the Agriculture Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2010. The bill funds vital programs at the Department of Agriculture, including provisions included in the Farm Bill, which was passed last year. Additionally, this legislation contains two projects sponsored by Representative Bright to aid agricultural research in Alabama. The conference report passed by a 263-162 margin, and passed by a similar margin when it was first considered in June. This is the final step before the President signs the bill into law.

“This bill funds the work of the previous Congress on the Farm Bill and provides our farmers and rural communities with the support they need and deserve,” Bright said. “This bill makes crucial investments that ensure the future of our nation’s agriculture community. I look forward to working on the Agriculture Committee to continue to support our farms and farmers and strengthen rural America.”

The Farm Bill, or the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, governs the bulk of Federal agriculture and related programs for the next four years. In addition to providing the funds for the Farm Bill, H.R. 2997 provides more than \$2.8 billion for USDA programs for rural communities such as rural housing, water projects, community facilities and economic development efforts. These programs help create new opportunities for growth and development in rural areas across the nation.

Other items in the bill include:

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\$910 million to protect American agriculture against animal and plant diseases

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\$1.3 billion for agricultural research

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\$400 million to fund loans and grants for high speed broadband internet

The
bill contains two projects sponsored by Congressman Bright that will aid the Alabama peanut industry. They are:

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\$1,748,000 for the Research Center on Detection and Food Safety at Auburn University (joint request with Congressman Mike Rogers (AL)). This project seeks to improve the safety of the U.S. food system by developing the science and engineering required to rapidly identify, pinpoint, and characterize problems that arise in the food supply chain. Congressman Bright requested the project in response to the June 2008 salmonella outbreak in peanuts.

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\$413,000 for the Tri-State Joint Peanut Research Project at Auburn University. The objective of this on-going tri-state research effort is to demonstrate the economical advantages of crop rotations and conservation tillage and the profitability associated with well managed cropping systems that are integrated with grazing systems. Given the 3.25 million acres of cotton and 925,000 acres of peanuts being grown in the Southeast (Georgia, Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia), livestock and conservation cropping could mean billions of dollars for the region's rural economy.

“These
are valuable projects that will see a strong return on investment and will benefit the Second District,” Bright said. “The Second District is home to one of the highest concentrations of peanut producers in the country, and I hope these projects go a long way in preserving and strengthening this vital industry. These projects are a wise use of taxpayer dollars because they are cost-effective, address critical needs, and have the potential to create jobs.”